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TAGS: PREL PTER KPKO UNSC IR KO LE SU

SUBJECT: FRENCH PERMREP PLEDGES TO WORK CLOSELY WITH USUN

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay M. Khalilzad, per 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Amb Khalilzad greeted newly-arrived French PermRep Jean-Maurice Ripert for a courtesy call on August 10. Ripert began the meeting by declaring bluntly that U.S.-French relations "are not what they should be," and that although the two countries might disagree, the "ways of disagreement should be different" than in the past. Noting his several past assignments in the U.S. and his close ties to French FM Kouchner, he said his assignment to New York signaled a desire to enhance U.S.-French cooperation at the UN. Ripert repeatedly offered to convene meetings of P-3 or Western countries to discuss management reform and the focus of the Human Rights Council (HRC), issues he described as joint U.S.-French priorities.

¶2. (C) Amb Khalilzad appealed for greater cooperation from Europe on UN reform. He argued that any reform package must be comprehensive, focusing on reform of UN management as well as the UNSC, in order to succeed. Ripert agreed but emphasized that the UNSC must reform now lest it lose its legitimacy in the eyes of much of the developing world. Noting that he had just concluded a tour in Geneva, Ripert urged the U.S. not to re-open the agenda of the Human Rights Council (HRC). While decrying the shortcomings of the agenda, he insisted it was "more balanced" than before, and argued the U.S. could still accomplish goals like establishing a Special Rapporteur position for Cuba under the current agenda. Ripert said the summit that France plans to host during its Presidency of the Council in September would focus on "crisis management" by the UNSC with a special emphasis on Africa. He specifically mentioned the effect of water shortages in Africa as a threat to international peace and security.

¶3. (C) The Ambassadors briefly touched on the major issues currently before the UNSC. Ripert declared that it was now "very clear" that France would be with the U.S. on the Iranian nuclear issue. While the sanctions regime is having an effect, if the UNSC wants to "touch" people in power in Iran, it will have to do so "where it hurts" -- in the pocketbook. On Kosovo, Ripert argued in favor of engaging Serbia, because its views on Kosovo are not the same as Russia. He acknowledged that Europe must convince Serbia that EU accession is possible and warned there would be "nothing worse" than a self-proclaimed Kosovo recognized only by the U.S. and a few Europeans. On Lebanon, Ripert argued that the upcoming extension of UNIFIL's mandate should be "strictly technical" and avoid contentious issues like illegal weapons transfers into Lebanon. Turning to Darfur, Ripert praised U.S. leadership in the Council and agreed to maintain pressure on the Secretariat to meet its deployment benchmarks quickly.

KHALILZAD